



Six Strategies for Professional Development in Cooperative Agreements with State Education Agencies, Local Education Agencies, and National Non-governmental Organizations

The overall goal for professional development in DASH-funded projects is improved student health behaviors. Building knowledge and skills in teachers, administrators, and other individuals invested in the well being of youth must be clearly linked to that goal. State education agencies, local education agencies and national non-governmental organizations should focus efforts on strengthening abilities to address the health issues and populations for which they are funded. Exemplary professional development incorporates a wide range of activities aimed at enabling health and health education professionals to carry out their work with and for youth. It provides opportunities for participants to identify areas for growth, learn about and use proven practices, problem-solve, develop skills, and reflect on and practice new strategies. While activities often include workshops, equally important are individualized methods such as coaching, mentoring, professional networks, technology-based learning opportunities, and ongoing follow up support. CDC has identified six strategies for professional development. Following is a description of those strategies, along with suggested action steps that delineate these strategies.

1) Establish an overall national, state, or district-wide plan for professional development.

- Identify professional development needs based on constituent requests and agency or project requirements.
- Outline planned professional development opportunities and explain how they will support the project's five year goals and current year objectives.
- Describe management issues, such as assessing needs, building capacity, tracking, communicating, designing and implementing training/professional development activities, providing follow-up and support, marketing, and evaluation.

2) Strengthen capacity to provide professional development.

- Nurture a cadre of trainers who can provide high quality professional development in a variety ways.
- Secure funding and support for essential professional development activities.
- Maintain a support staff position to manage logistics.
- Employ marketing strategies to recruit trainers and facilitators for professional development events.

3) Implement well planned professional development events.

- Identify the intended target audience, and specify prerequisites for attendance.
- Utilize trainers with appropriate background and expertise.
- Build on a plan that utilizes current adult education theories.
- Present concepts that are consistent with current health education theory and content that is scientifically accurate.
- Comply with district, state, and national policies and regulations and standards.
- Develop a written training design that describes what participants will learn and be able to do as a result of the event, lists materials and supplies needed to conduct the activity, and outline an agenda of activities that are consistent with the learning objectives.
- Provide sufficient time to meet the stated objectives.
- Provide time and guidance for participants to develop specific action plans that incorporate their new skill and learning into practice.
- Provide formal continuing education credits.

4) Provide follow-up support.

- Implement a tracking system that identifies who and what types of professionals were trained, on what topics, and by whom.
- Provide support to participants after a professional development event to help them incorporate the skills and learning into their work.

5) Market professional development offerings.

- Disseminate information about overall national/state/district opportunities as well as for specific events.
- Employ a variety of strategies to disseminate information about these events.

6) Evaluate effectiveness.

- Gather feedback on specific professional development activities, on trainers, and on participant outcomes and maintain this information in an organized data management system (such as CDC's Training Tracker).
- Assess changes in practice that occur as a result of professional development offerings.
- Consider data from multiple sources (tracking system, School Health Education Profile, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, needs analysis, event evaluations) to inform decisions about future professional development offerings and strategies.